

**Testimony of  
Charles W. McCaffrey  
Director, Veterans Business Outreach Center  
At Community Business Partnership**

**Before the  
U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship  
*Empowering Veteran Entrepreneurship*  
Thursday, June 25, 2015**

I would like to thank the members of the Committee for allowing me this opportunity to testify today and to encourage the Committee's continued support of Veteran Entrepreneurship programs. I am Charles McCaffrey and I am the Director of the Veterans Business Outreach Center at Community Business Partnership in Springfield, Virginia.

I am a Navy Veteran with 20 years of military and government contracting experience. I am also a serial small business owner – first as a partner in an Italian market and deli in State College, Pennsylvania, and more recently as a management consultant here in the metro Washington DC area. When I left military service 10 years ago, my transition consisted of a 2 day class on how to claim Veterans' benefits, how to write a resume and how to tie a double Windsor. I am pleased to see that the Transition Assistance Program has expanded since then, and I am honored to be able to lend my entrepreneurial experience to assisting our transitioning military service men and women.

The organization I represent, Community Business Partnership (CBP), was founded in 1995 and is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization working in collaboration with local, regional and national organizations to promote small business growth in our communities. We are a sponsored program of George Mason University under the Office of Research and Economic Development.

We accomplish our mission through a variety of separately-funded programs including a Small Business Development Center (SBDC), a Women's Business Center (WBC), a Business Finance Center and a Business Incubation Center that provide training and counseling, access to capital, low-cost office and meeting space and networking opportunities geared to meet the needs of today's small business owners. On May 1<sup>st</sup> of this year, Community Business Partnership was designated as the Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC) for the National Capital Region; including Northern Virginia, Washington DC, Maryland, and Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Although we only recently received designation as an SBA Resource Partner for Veterans' services, Community Business Partnership has a long history of supporting Veteran entrepreneurship. For the past 10 years, we have coordinated and hosted the Annual Veterans in Business Conference at Army Navy Country Club in Arlington, Virginia. The Veterans in Business Conference provides education, networking and business opportunities for Veteran and Service Disabled Veteran small business owners. What started as a small gathering of 25 Veteran business owners has grown to be the premier Veterans' entrepreneurship conference in the metro Washington DC area – bringing together more than 275 Veteran business owners, federal agency representatives, prime contractors, non-profits and service providers each year. We have been honored to have such small business advocates as Mr. Andre Gudger, Director for the Department of Defense Office of Small Business Programs, Congressman Don Beyer (D-VA 8<sup>th</sup> District), Congressman Gerald Connolly (D-VA 11th District), Senator Mark Warner (D-

VA) and the Honorable Maria Contreras-Sweet, Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration, as our keynote speakers.

In 2012, we were approached by the Transition Assistance Program at Marine Corps Base Henderson Hall to provide entrepreneurship training to transitioning Marines as part of the Department of Defense Entrepreneurship Pathway. At the time, Boots to Business was an unfunded program requirement that involved significant commitment from our limited resources. Having supported socially and economically disadvantaged small business owners for many years, we knew this was a worthwhile initiative and we became part of the pilot program. In 2014, the SBDC at CBP, along with the SBA Washington District Office and its resources partners, ranked number 1 in the country for total number of Boots to Business classes held (34) and total number of attendees (727). In addition, we participated in the Boots to Business REBOOT program held at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building with 110 attendees comprised of Veterans and their spouses and families. In 2015, we (along with other SBA resource partners in the area) are positioned to provide Boots to Business classes on 16 military installations in the metro Washington DC area as well as a REBOOT program and monthly one-day intensive business planning boot camps.

Additionally in 2014, Community Business Partnership held 244 training events with 3,430 attendees and provided 1,119 hours of counseling to 413 clients. Veterans make up 11 percent of our training clients and 17 percent of our counseling clients. We would not be able to achieve these numbers were it not for our many public and private partners including our local Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Authorities, the VA Center for Veterans Enterprise (CVE), Objective Rally Point DC, the National Veteran-Owned Business Association (NaVOBA), Dog Tag Bakery and the Yellow Ribbon Fund.

And I must thank our many sponsors and volunteers who give graciously of their time, their experience and their funding in support of our Veteran entrepreneurship programs. Corporate sponsors including BAE Systems, Lockheed Martin, Capital One Bank, TD Bank, Quality Support, Inc., and Planate Management Group. And individuals such as Bob LeMay, Bonnie Sanchez, Jason Osser, Michael Mort, Fern Hernberg, Rebecca Geller and Patrick Behan. Just to name a few.

As proud as I am of numbers representing our support of Veteran entrepreneurs, it is their successes that really tells the story.

Staci Redmon is a 3rd generation service-disabled veteran. Her maternal grandfather served in the Army during World War II and her father served in the Army during Vietnam. Her paternal grandfather served in the Merchant Marines. Her daughter served in the Navy, and her son-in-law is currently serving in the Marine Corps.

After 20 plus years of federal service in uniform, as a civil servant, and as an industry contractor, Staci started Strategy and Management Services, Inc. (SAMS) in 2008 with the intent to “exceed expectations with people who make a difference” in the federal contracting arena. Staci was a participant in the first Veteran Entrepreneurship Mentoring Group started by the Fairfax SBDC in 2010, and was a resident business in the Business Incubation Center at Community Business Partnership. At the time, she had just one employee assisting with business development. She received business training from our Women’s Business Center and lending assistance our Business Finance Center. Through budget cuts, sequestration and furloughs, Staci has endured with the support of Community Business Partnership, and closed their 2014 financial year generating more than \$13.5M in revenue with 130 employees.

Every year, SAMS gives back 1 percent of their annual profits to non-profit organizations that support veterans and family members of veterans. They have made donations to organizations such as: Operation Homefront, Veterans Moving Forward and the Lead the Way Fund. SAMS employees also annually participate in the American Cancer Society Relay for Life.

SAMS is a Veterans First hiring company. Employees with prior military service often bring key insight, experience and knowledge of their government customers' needs and requirements, helping them develop better solutions for their most critical challenges. Over 90 percent of SAMS employee staff is Veterans, or family members of Veterans.

Staci has devoted countless hours to coaching, counseling and mentoring emerging Veteran and non-Veteran owned businesses. She never misses an opportunity to meet with entrepreneurs to share her lessons learned and to help others along the way. As SAMS grows, they are always looking for ways to help start-up companies. They frequently team with emerging companies so that as they win work together, they can help the new companies build past performance and put infrastructure in place to grow.

In 2013, Staci received the Virginia Small Business Veteran of the Year Award from the Virginia SBDC Network. Staci exemplifies the spirit of this award in service to her country, success in business and involvement with her community. And she also embodies the long-term commitment that the SBA resource partners strive for with their clients.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and to share our efforts and our successes in supporting Veteran entrepreneurship.